THE HEART OF THE WEED

To win the secret of the weed's plain heart
Lowell

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by Mrs. E. C. Perry

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HEART OF THE WEED

MRS. E.C. PERRY

To win the secret of the weed's plain heart
LOWELL

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TO HELEN CHOATE BELL.

Graceful thy fancy, rare thy wit and kind,
Warming the coldest by thine eloquence.
Thy speech's magic in the dullest mind
Kindles some answering glow, some gladdening sense.
As round dull stones the delicate swift stream
With light caresses runs its pretty race,
Brightening their tints till jewels fair they seem,
Those happy stones made jewels for a space,
This rare delight on me dost thou bestow,
As grave and gay by turn, in varied mood
Thou makest me forget myself, and know
Now tears, now smiles, as each to thee seems good;
Yet for this higher boon my soul doth pine —
That I might give one moment's joy to thine!

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THE HEART OF THE WEED.

SONNET.

I WILL not wish all grief and loss and fears
Should leave my life and let my heart go free;
For then true love could never come to me, —
That deepest love that has its birth in tears,
And never unto laughing eyes appears,
But only rises from grief's boundless sea,
As, where black night and ocean blended be,
Sudden the moon its tranquil splendor rears.

Though rough the waters, golden is the way
That guides to it my weary heart and eyes;
And a soft whisper through the night wind sighs,
"They know me not who see me but by day;
Love's moon shines brightest from the darkest skies;
Its golden path across grief's ocean lies!"

TO ———.

Fair girl, whose eyes just touched with seriousness
Look dreamy forth, while your curved lips are smiling
As though you listened to the sweet beguiling
Of love, half understood, yet felt to bless
With steadfast constancy, and grow no less
For all the changes that the years are bringing,
Tell me, what voices in your heart are singing
A happy song of priceless tenderness?

Do you stand gazing o'er life's distant sea,
A smiling maid, a happy wife to be,
As might a child, who ne'er has heard the roar
Of the great ocean beating on the shore,
Stand with a shell pressed to its rosy ear
The far-off echo of the waves to hear?

AN EVENING WALK.

As silent, hand in hand, we tread
The darkling path where twilight's softest shadows hide,
Dark rustling branches overhead
Soft whisper tenderness our lips dare not confide.

Low hanging bushes sweep my cheek,
And draw me to thy side as that mute touch were thine, —
Fragrant caresses that would speak
The love that neither knows and each fears to divine.

Sometimes the path before our feet
Grows white when through sparse trees the starlight gleams,
Then darkens with a darkness sweet
Wherein we blindly walk in tender dreams.

Our lips are silent; but the voice
Of summer woods thrills through our hearts to-night,
And bids us timidly rejoice
In what we guess, but know not with a known delight.

FORGIVENESS.

Dear, tender heart, let not my idle word
Pain thee, for whom I 'd call down joy from Heaven;
Ah, would to me the blessed power were given
To fill with joy the heart I lightly stirred
To grief but now! Yet, think not I preferred
To wound thus wantonly whom oft I 've striven
In vain to pleasure; smile on me forgiven, —
Smile, smile once more! Forget that thus I erred
Light-heartedly! Ah, God, that it should be
Thus sadly easy to wound or annoy
The heart wherein we hold our dearest treasure!
The more we love, the more we learn to see
How very little we can give of joy;
And that not smiles, but tears, our love must measure.

TRUTH EVEN IN INCONSTANCY.

Tell me if thou art changed, in pity tell!
I cannot bear this doubt; it were less pain
To give up love, than love and doubt again.
Tell me the truth then now, though it should knell
Love's death. I do implore, if thou hold'st dear
Aught of the past, and if, mistakenly,
Thou dread'st to strike the blow, strike and set free
This heart that, save of falsehood, knows no fear.

Hast thou loved me so long and dost not know
That I 'd not strive to hold love that would go?
Truth to thyself, e'en in inconstancy,
This is the sum and all I ask of thee.
Be true, dear heart, thy truth shall give release,
And, though some tears may fall, they shall bring peace.

A LOVER TO HIS MISTRESS.

I.

Capricious as the waves thou seem'st to me;
And now these waves, all smile and sparkle, tell
Of joy and peace, and with their gentle swell
They gayly bear me in security;
While for my sober looks, thou merrily
Dost chide, and ask me if thy love repel,
That o'er my joy a sudden gloom there fell
Like a dark cloud. Alas, my love, the sea,
To which I liken thee, in storms may rise;
Where, then, my frail bark when the tempest 's past?
As deep I gaze in thy pellucid eyes,
That mirror back for me the ocean vast,
Full many a wreck in their fair depths there lies,—
Alas, I shall not be the first or last!

HER ANSWER.

II.

Capricious am I, and of varying mood?
By each soft breath of fancy lightly stirred
As ocean's waves? Ah, no! but like a bird —
A free bird flying in the fresh wildwood —
That fearless whirled about you as you stood,
Nor knew its freedom gone, till at your word
It nestled in your heart, nor e'er preferred
Again that frantic flight that erst seemed good.
But since you liken to the summer sea,
All treacherous with sudden change, my love,
Then anchor deep with chain that cannot part —
Find in my love ocean's immensity —
Since that you need of me the tie shall prove
That weakens never in a woman's heart.

I ASK NOT TO BE PERFECT.

I ASK not to be perfect in thy sight, —
If but some charm in me thy dear love find,
Like a pale moon o'er my dull heart and mind,
Flinging sweet mystery and shadowy light,
Softening rough outlines into beauty bright,
Till to my very faults thou grow'st so kind
That they but form love's chain and closer bind
Thy heart to mine with love's unreasoning might.

Thus loved by thee, and by thee understood,
Nor dreading to be known to thy sweet love,
Since being thine, myself I more approve,
Nor fear to show each varying thought and mood;
An uncaged bird, my soul, by love set free,
Soars in a heaven of joy and sings of thee.

SYMPATHY.

You say I must not grieve though you are sad.
Is it, then, nothing that my heart seems breaking
With your despair? and all my thoughts, forsaking
Their quiet home, when they are oft so glad
Beneath your smile, now sweep forth in a mad
Whirlwind of sorrow, like a tempest shaking
The forest to its depths, wild music making
Through its torn branches; till the rustic lad
Shrinks in his attic at its tuneful moan,
Shakes at its sudden crash, and hides his head
Beneath the sheet, till it is spent in weeping
Just ere the dawn, and lulls him back to sleeping; —
So with your dawning smile my grief is fled,
But think not you can ever grieve alone.

TO ONE DESPONDENT.

Sometimes you doubt my love, and sad tears rise
To eyes like shady pools, grown dark and clear
With wistful questioning if I hold you dear,
And thus my answering smile to you replies.
We breathe to live, — yet, 'neath these summer skies,
Though we scarce feel our breathing, do not fear
That life has ceased, or long for winter drear
To show each snowy breath that heavenward flies.

And though I laugh while others sing your praise,
If the world scorn and hold you in despite,
Then shall you more rejoice than you have grieved,
Seeing love greater far than you believed;
As first we see the eternal stars' bright rays
When creeps the dark, imponderable night.

RECONCILIATION.

You wrong me when you weep with bitter fear
Lest such slight fault should drive my love away;
What though you frowned upon me for a day,
Whose love has compassed me for many a year?
And tenderly you wiped away the tear
Your words had caused, and love resumed its sway
Seeing my grief. Yet, weeping now, you say,
"I cannot love you!" Can I not, my dear?
Can I help loving you who love me so
That all my thoughts are yours, my heart your heart,
With whom so long I 've shared my every woe?
'T were for my "happiness that we should part"?
Then weeping for your loss, where should I rest?
Where weep my grief out? On your loving breast!

TO ———.

Lie lightly, earth, upon that breast
Where so oft my head hath lain;
Strange to think he can find rest,
While my heart throbs high with pain.

Strange his heart can lie so still!
Have my tears no power to move
Him my lightest grief could thrill
With answering pangs of sorrowing love?

O grief! — O tears! — had I but known,
Since shared by him ye were but bliss,
Ye were but joy, — and now, alone,
I first must find what sorrow is!

A DREAM.

Love wraps me in a dark and gloomy veil,
Through which all things unreal and sombre seem,
And the warm striving sunlight still must fail
To pierce my darkness with its kindliest beam,
And cannot warm my cheek, tear-stained and pale,
Down which fall bitter tears in a slow stream
I cannot stem with fingers wan and frail, —
Yet this same love was once a golden dream!
A golden dream that in its sunny haze
Made all things seem most fair and all hearts kind,
And earth a heaven of consecrated days;
Then from my dream I woke in sad amaze,
The love that was my joy, my grief to find,
And yet love's chain I would not loose, but bind!

GRIEF.

I THOUGHT to die when that great sorrow came,
But learned too soon that an intenser life
Than joy can give, burns in the soul at strife
Against itself. The bitterest griefs but maim,
And kill not; when my very heart was rent
With doubt and longing, and with anguish spent,
Then life leaped up within me like a flame.
Then my grief-stricken heart first felt the whole
Great sorrowful struggle of humanity.
Why, why, O God, awoke such life in me
When, weary, for death's sleep clamored my soul?
Why beat sad hearts with quickest sympathy,
And why must tear-washed eyes most clearly see
To read all others' woe on life's grim scroll?

TO A FRIEND, WITH MAIN'S "TREASURY OF SONNETS."

THOU pretty sonnet, that with measured pace
Would'st make my fancies walk, no more set free
To roam the wildwood in their careless glee,
But chained by thee within a little space, —
Thou 'mind'st me of some lovely girlish face
From Reynolds' canvas, whose sweet roguery
But borrows, from her prim formality
Of pose, and costume stiff, a quainter grace.

Come, then, fair creature, with fit offering
For him who bade me love thee for thyself,
And courage taught to bind me with thy chain!
Yet since my voice is weak thy song to sing,
Come, sweet tormentor, come, my tricksy elf,
Come bring thy fairer sisters, whom he 'll not disdain.

IN ANSWER TO A SONNET.

A FAIR ideal you show me, that I deem
Most worthy in a poet's heart to rise,
As Dian lovely in the summer skies;
Reflected in your soul as in a stream,
You show me mine own image, like a dream
Of sweet inspiring womanhood, most wise,
Serene, and tender, that with steadfast eyes
The ideal of fair friendliness would seem.

Ah! where a sharper pang than thus to see
Myself, high imaged in another heart?
To see, and feel with hot, reproachful tears,
That thus I might have been, thus should I be!
Thus will I be! nor shall that dream depart
Save as the moon retreats when day appears.

A FIRST MEETING.

You came, your eyes met mine, my wintry pride,
Which long the eager waters of my soul
In icy bondage held, its grim control
Yielded. In that sweet warmth so long denied
They found the freedom for which they had sighed
And vainly struggled in their prison cold.
Freed by the sunshine of your smile, they rolled
In a glad torrent forth; the joyous tide
Coaxed with its gentle touch the tender green
To venture forth along its path, till now
A strip of emerald herbage may be seen
O'er which the waving willows softly bow;
And in the golden depths of that clear stream
Thy sunbeams linger like a happy dream.

AH, LOVE ME NOT.

Ah, love me not! To love we have no claim,
And should we love, then we must say good-by.
But join with me thy highest thought and aim,
And each shall give to each that sympathy
By which from pain a higher joy is won
And echoes through our hearts eternally.
Ah, love me not, — but love no other one!

Ah, love me not! but let thy soul with mine
Climb the steep heights of life; made yet more strong
By the pure friendship that is half divine,
Since unabashed it moves amidst the throng
Of hopes and prayers I pour before God's throne, —
And yet not quite to Heaven it doth belong.
So love me not, — but love no other one!

Yet, if thy hot heart cannot bear the strain,
Nor in pure ether of such friendship dwell,
Worse than to lose thee were the bitter pain
To see thee lose thyself, in surging swell
Of hopes thou should'st not hope. "By me undone?"
"Never!" My quivering lips firm shape, "Farewell!"
Farewell, forget me, — love some happier one!

WITH A COPY OF HEINE'S "GEDICHTE."

Oft o'er this book with glowing cheeks I 've hung,
My youthful heart dilating with the grief
Made musical of one who sought relief
From his sad heart while to the world he sung
With accents passionate that all hearts wrung, —
Moved by his tenderness, poignant yet brief,
Then scorched by his swift scorn and unbelief
Which mocked the world, yet to its pity clung.

Part of my youth it seems; there linger yet
Faint pencil lines beside the verse I loved;
And if in reading it you too are moved
Till on the selfsame page down fall your tears,
Then they will wash away the weary years
Before you were my friend, before we met.

LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP.

Ah! let not love the grave of friendship be!
Love, mighty, rushing, a tempestuous sea,
Grasps friendship's flower fall'n within its reach,
Engulfs its fragile charms with savage glee,
Raises it high upon the wave's white crest,
With brighter hues and sparkling jewels drest,
Then flings it bruised upon the stony beach,
A broken thing, that but in death finds rest.

WHILE LOVE LIES DYING.

While love lies dying, whom my bright hopes crowned,
I gayly laugh and hide with flowers the wound.
Let love die smiling since pride will not die!
My lover struck my heart, and then passed by;
It sprang to meet him, and the blow it met.
Come, Death, come quickly! teach it to forget!

A LOOK.

You raised your eyes grown dark with unshed tears,
With straight sad look they gazed into my own,
And though till then your love I had not known,
I know it now and for all coming years!
A love that asks no hope, but lives by fears,
And in renouncing is but stronger shown.
That look struck on my heart as might a tone
Of some deep solemn bell, from tower that rears
Its slender height to heaven, calling to prayers
Those careless souls who sing and dance below.
So did your gaze of sweet and solemn woe;
And from my mirth I ceased as one who hears
With quickly beating heart that solemn call,
And from my eyes that smiled, slow tears 'gan fall.

I'D GIVE RELEASE.

As might some idle girl in a wildwood
Unto a sweet, shy bird draw softly near
And whistle to it, its rare song to hear,
And strive to call it to her if she could, —
So did I strive to charm your silent mood
When first we met, — and charmed o'er-well I fear,
For in your eyes I read myself too dear,
And know not how to aid you though I would.

Since love I cannot give, I'd give release,
For she should loose who forged your lingering chain ;
So, go my friend! we ne'er must meet again
Till in forgetfulness you have found peace ;
What though our parting cost me weary pain, —
Who careless sows must reap the bitter grain!

A PRISONED BIRD.

A PRISONED bird, within thy hand it lay,
My throbbing heart! — and struggled to be free;
But gently thou didst smile and with it play.
'T was play to thee; but ah, what was 't to me?
For when thou oped thy hand and bade it fly,
To fly it had forgot, and nestled there;
Then at thy feet let fall, sang mournfully,
Content e'en so, would'st thou but hear its prayer,
Nor spurn it hence, but let it flutter near,
Untempted by the blue of alien skies,
Less blue, less deep, alas, how much less dear,
Since that one glimpse at thy sweet smiling eyes!
A heart untamed thou canst not give me now,
The caged bird has forgot to love the bough.

RENUNCIATION.

I WOULD but know thee happy, though afar;
I would but see thy joy shine like a star,
One bright star shining through my cloudy night,
Lifting my heart by its sweet steadfast light;
And though hemmed in by darkness, here alone
I grope and seek thy hand, then know it gone,
And feel the desolation that is left
My solitary life, of thee bereft.
I will not send my heart up with a cry
And call thee from the lovely distant sky,
Where, 'mid fair shining stars, clouds from me hide,
I know thee happier than when by my side.

ABSENCE.

No more the footsteps on the street,
The busy city's buzz and whir,
Seem rhythmic with a music sweet,
With pathos strange my heart to stir
In soft, melodious beat.

No more these summer evenings fair
Shall wear the new mysterious charm
They 've worn of late, when, heat and glare
Turned to cool twilight, arm in arm
We walked as if on air.

Gladly we yielded to its power,
Felt the great human heart more near;
The thronging street in that dim hour
Seemed full of friends, and all were dear;
Life opened like a flower.

Through the soft darkness throbbed a voice,
The evening star, a clear sweet song
Breathed through our hearts: "Rejoice, rejoice!
For love is sweet, but friendship strong,
And yours the highest choice."

But now, alas, my friend, thou 'rt gone,
With thee those lovely dreams are fled;
No more, resistless, on and on
Sweeps fancy's tide; my thoughts are dead,
Since I must think alone.

My soul was but the violin,
And thine the hand that drew the bow
And woke the harmonies within,
Which quivering through my heart would go
With joy akin to pain.

Now through the silence breathes a sigh,
As if the very soul of song
Breathed on the strings as it passed by,
And sweetly sang that thou didst long
For me, no longer nigh.

Though far thy hand, thy heart is here,
Thy loving thoughts awake the chords
Of thrilling harmonies, that fear
To voice themselves in idle words
Lest they should sound too dear.

SONG.

Your eyes are eloquent
Though your lips silent be,
And from those eyes is sent
Sad love to me.
Sad love that darkens there
Like violets after rain,
But renders them more fair,
Loving in vain.

Your lips that closèd be
Such piteous sweet curves take,
As touch the heart of me
And bid it ache:
And bid it dream and guess
Your grieving heart, and share
Its yearning tenderness,
Its sweet despair.

A GIFT.

While here we sit and watch the after-glow
Of the fair sun scarce sunk behind the hill,
Its twilight loveliness my heart doth thrill
With tender wish some great gift to bestow, —
To give to thee some joy unmixed with woe,
This fairest day of June, that lingers still
As if it longed to stay till I could fill
Thy cup of happiness to overflow.

Such tender friendship as is mine to give
I offer thee, and if my tenderness
Seem less than love, it shall as long endure
And grow but stronger in the hour of stress;
More love you give, but not a love more pure, —
Perhaps the lesser may the longer live.

SHALL I TURN FROM THEE?

SHALL I turn from thee, shutting my heart's door,
Because I cannot give thee happiness?
Shall I deny the greater, if the less
I cannot give, since it is mine no more?
And yet, what I forego, I would implore
Of Heaven for thee with never-ceasing stress!
Since I can give but what myself possess,
Take thou my grief, my love was given before.

Yet will I never wrong that heart of thine,
Bidding thee love me less, since love must be
Its own reward, — all that thou hast of me!
For such a noble life love shall inspire,
That, missing joy, thou shalt find something higher —
A soul by love made pure, by grief made fine.

GOOD–BY.

If 't is true that our joy has no morrow,
How can we rejoice in to-day?
For a pang that 's far keener than sorrow
Is the joy that we know cannot stay.

Is life sweet? Then how much the more bitter
Is the tread of Death's foot on the stair,
For the jewel that brightest would glitter
Is joy's tear on the cheek of despair.

If our love steal one moment of gladness
From a lifetime of sorrowful years,
As we drain life's full cup of sweet madness
It o'erbrims with our fast-falling tears.

Let us choose, then, the pangs that the heart wring
With a joy that all pleasures deny,
Since we know that for love's sake we 're parting;
There 's a lingering joy in Good-by.

WRITTEN FOR MUSIC.

Sad is my sleeping and sadder yet my waking;
I bear thy sorrows in my heart, more mine than are my own;
All the sweet dreaming of youth and joy forsaking,
I've learned to know that life for me holds but thy grief alone.

Thou bidd'st me not to love thee, since loving brings such sorrow;
As well forbid the flowers to grow, fed by the gentle rain;
If to-day I left thee, I should return to-morrow,
Asking but this — to be with thee and share thy every pain.

A thistle-down, light floating, is love that springs in gladness,
When laughing eyes and rosy lips challenge the careless kiss;
But in my heart's core rooted is this love that grew in sadness;
Had I first known thee happy, I had never loved like this.

THOU SHALT NOT GRIEVE ALONE.

If sudden gloom upon thy spirit fall,
My world is darkened all;
Yet do not shun my glance, nor turn aside
With an unfriendly pride;
Thou need'st not hope thy sorrow to disguise
From my love-quickened eyes, —
My dearest joy is thus thy grief to share,
And soothe with tender care.
Then softly place thy hand within my own,
Thou shalt not grieve alone.
No word I 'll speak, but my mute touch shall tell
The love thou know'st so well.
In the soft twilight sitting hand in hand,
Thou 'lt learn to understand
The tenderness that knits my soul to thine
With sympathy divine.
Then let grim Melancholy knock at thy heart's door,
She 'll find Love there before!

TEACH ME SOME CHARM.

TEACH me some charm to send joy through thy heart
In a glad tide, and sweep all grief away,
As when the golden, glorious light of day
Rises behind the hills, with beams that dart
Through the pale courts of night, cleaving apart
Cloud shadowy doors, on its triumphant way
Sweeping far o'er the fields, across the bay,
Waking the white-winged ships with sudden start,
And paving for their course a path of gold,
As through the lambent waves they swiftly glide,
Soon lost in gold and crimson, out of sight;
Or, if I may not know the joy untold,
Myself to make thee happy, let me guide
Thee forth to happiness, afar from my love's night.

SONG.

Heart, heart, cease loving;
Weep no more, O eyes;
Sun, sun, cease moving
Through the glowing skies!

Roar no more, ocean,
Smooth thy leaping waves
Cease, heart's commotion,
That for love still craves.

Canst stay the sun descending?
The eager waves canst smooth?
Thou canst not make love's ending,
Though thou first taught to love.

TO THEE I NEVER SAY GOOD-BY!

Ah! what if friendship or if love
Is called the knot that ties us two,
What care I? since it harder prove
Than Gordian knot, and when cut through
The severed parts together spring,
And but the crimson on the knife
Proclaims it the accursed thing
Would come between me and my life.
I love you as my life? Ah, no!
My very life to me thou art!
I give to you my heart? Not so;
If thou must go, good-by, my heart!
If thou must go, no more I have
Or hope, or heart, or breath, or life;
My soul with thee a willing slave,
My body here maintains the strife;
And only one who loves could know
That when thou went'st I too did go.
To thee I never say Good-by
In time or in eternity.

I GIVE THEE NAUGHT.

I GIVE thee naught, and yet I give thee all!
All that I have to give, my empty hands,
I offer thee; yet if thy love demands
A full return, and if thou let them fall
And turn away, I'll not strive to recall
Thee to my side; God knows I never strove
To win from thee a word, or look of love;
But friendship placed between us as a wall.

Yet, if thou wilt not go, and in thine own
Firm clasp enfold these trembling hands of mine,
And say my friendship can for more atone
Than e'en he suffers who must love resign,
How can I go and leave thee all alone?
Mine own grief I could bear, but, ah! not thine.

WISHES AND PRAYERS.

Our wishes and our prayers are not
Always the same;
Alas! we often wish for what
We dare not name.

We strive to pray with bitter tears
For what we should,
But sadder than all else appears
The prayed-for good.

Lord! pardon me if I deplore
My granted prayer;
Lord, what thou taught'st me to pray for,
Teach me to bear.

A YEAR.

Gone is this year! gone from my life away,
But what it brought me must with me remain,
And what it took from me can ne'er again
Be mine, e'en to my life's last day.
Secure in joy I trod my careless way;
Joy turned to love, love died away in pain;
And yet I would not have this sorrow wane;
Since love has left naught else, let love's grief stay!

Stay with me, gentle grief, love's child art thou;
Let thy soft pitying hand fall on my brow,
And from all mists of self make clear mine eyes,
Quick to divine another's woe with wise
And tender sympathy, *that*'s left me here,
Though gone young ignorant joy, gone with this year!

RETURN.

HERE on the steps I sit as long ago.
Some little change there seems: the vine its leaves
O'erhead flings broader, thicker darkness weaves,
And heavier branches sweep the path below;
While from its fragrant shade I watch the slow
Long shadows of the elms creep o'er the grass,
And hear the tinkling cow-bells as they pass,
Like one who dreams, but neither joys nor grieves.

And still the same, but yet the same no more
As when a girl I looked out through the years.
Some hopes I see fulfilled, and, ah! some fears,
Since last I sat in this familiar door.
I would not be a girl again, and yet
With sudden tears my folded hands are wet.

REMEMBRANCE.

Mine eyes charmed by the shadows on the hill
With ever-changing beauty sweeping by,
Now blue, now gold, now purple to the eye, —
I sit and watch each change more lovely still,
My book slips from my hand forgotten, till
Upon the ground it falls. There let it lie!
The poems of the mountain and the sky
Speak to my heart with a far deeper thrill.
Once more return those long past summer days,
Once more I feel your presence by my side;
You gently take my hand that with you stays,
Nor is withdrawn in coldness or in pride,
While we together watch the purple haze
Fast deepening on the hills at eventide.

II.

Again I stand where we stood long ago,
Beneath the apple-tree upon the hill,
And gaze far o'er the sloping orchard till
My heart warms with a half-forgotten glow,
To see the misty valley stretch below
In its old loveliness; and my eyes fill,
And half I turn with an expectant thrill
To meet the sympathy, in eyes I know.
Alas! the quiet sky alone I see,
And the long shadows trembling on the grass;
I hear but sighing of the evening breeze
Amid the gnarlèd branches of the trees.
Then wearily and slow I homeward pass,
Dreaming of one who hath forgotten me.

TO AN UNKNOWN BIRD.

Dear bird! thy name I know not, but thy call,
Sweet like a flute, yet with half human note,
I know and love, and bless the little throat
From whence such heavenly plaintive notes let fall
Sink to my heart, and stir it more than all
The clear wild trills that through the woodland float,
Waking my sleeping heart to joys remote,
Vague and mysterious dreams, yet fair withal!

And wild, sweet visions pass before my eyes,
As when a girl I wandered in the wood,
And of my musings thy song seemed a part
And sweet expression, echoing through my heart,
Of that imagined grief, — the dearest food
Of souls too young to know where sorrow lies.

TO ———.

Dead rose-leaves whence the color 's fled
Than these your poems are not more dead.
You cannot love that love again,
Gone is its sweetness, gone its pain.
I too am dead, and so forgot
That you may think you loved me not.
And yet the girl whom then you loved,
And whom your love so little moved,
When taught by life's deep searching pain,
Love, longing, striving, questioning vain, —
Reading your verses after years
Of hard forgetfulness, through tears, —
First learned with tardy gratitude
To know with what high love you sued,
And wish that when she was no more,
You too should read your verses o'er
With faint regret for her now gone,
And some slight joy, that, though unwon,
The woman learned to understand
How great the gift the careless hand
Of girlhood with scant thanks let fall.
And as you read you may recall
Some lingering echoes of the time
When thus you poured your soul in rhyme,

And, like the scent round rose-leaves clinging,
The love still in your verses ringing
Your thoughts of one now dead, may render
A little sad, a little tender.

SWITZERLAND.

WHERE snowy peaks on peaks reach to the sky,
And giant solitudes stretch far around,
Where undulating whiteness on the ground,
And clouds scarce whiter far above me lie,
What is it that so lifts my soul on high?
While all is silence but for the faint sound
Of mountain torrents in yon chasm profound
That seek the ocean, though they know not why.

Great Life above us all, does my soul seek
Thee, as the unconscious torrent seeks the sea?
Is it Thy greatness that I feel in me,
This sense of life and beauty, that doth speak
To every fibre of my bounding heart,
That leaps to know *Thee whole*, myself a part?

A SYMPHONY.

I HEAR the sweet low twittering of the violins
That prelude soft the full orchestral chords
With which the symphony begins,
As when the foreboding voices of the birds
Herald the coming storm, far o'er the hills,
That sweeps along with full-breathed majesty,
And half with awe and half with pleasure thrills
My throbbing heart, as 'neath the darkening sky
I watch its near approach and wait the sudden crash
Followed by listening silence, as the storm draws breath
Ere in a blinding whirl with flash on flash
It flings itself tumultuous, strong as death,
Nay, strong as *life*, upon the earth beneath.
And the same mighty power that calls the soul
Softly at midnight 'neath the silent stars
Now swells it with the strenuous thunder roll,
Breaking its chains and tearing down its bars,
Until the joyous spirit sweeps along
A part of fearless nature, free and strong,
So full of life it cannot fear to die;
Then sudden from its glorious ecstasy
Down drops the music to a strain
Of weeping, as the storm in rain

Would spend itself in sweetest pain;
And thrills the violoncello's song
The heart which for pure love would long,
And bids it suffer and be strong;
And bids it suffer since there seems
No joy on earth except in dreams.
Through lowering skies no sun there gleams.
But music lives though life be brief;
And the strain grows so sweet that grief
Is spent in tears that bring relief.
O Beethoven! these tears to thee!
From love and sorrow thou art free;
Yet love and grief undying be
That speak so to the hearts of men,
And bid them grieve, yet love again,
Although the loving all be vain!
And now the harmony still sweeter grown
Speaks to all hearts of love, and love alone —
Of love triumphant over death and sorrow,
Of love that knows no night nor fears the morrow,
Of love that is so sweet it must be sad,
Yet in its very pain but grows more glad.
"Who loves first lives, and love is life's best aim!"
The strenuous violins thrilling proclaim,
And deeper tones give back the low reply —
"Who lives in one sad heart can never die!"
Then all unite in one exultant strain
As birds when breaks through clouds the sun again;
Higher and sweeter yet the music soared,

Ending at last in one clear golden chord
Which seems to float above me in the air,
Breathing of love but made by death more fair,
That fills the heart and drives away repining
As through the fresh green leaves the sun is shining.

BEETHOVEN'S ADELAIDE.

By Music's living voice how cold is rhyme!
Ah, happy he that loved, and loved in vain,
But knew to sing his love in such a strain
As soars to Heaven, and needeth not to climb;
Lifting our hearts with its sweet grief sublime!
Fairer than joy is such immortal pain
That makes all hearts to love his love again, —
His love triumphant over death and time!

Dearest! could I to thee such homage give,
And wake to love of thee all hearts that live,
Like Beethoven, I 'd live and die alone,
Since for my grief thy glory should atone;
And dying I might leave my love undying,
And know that every heart her name was sighing.

DOUBT.

Though that which made my life is fled,
I still could live and still could smile,
Were I but sure thy love now dead
Once lived a little while.

The future I can bear to lose,
But not the past, — oh, not the past!
Ah, love! do not this prayer refuse,
And it shall be my last.

Ah, love! when 'neath the oak we stood,
The moon pale-gleaming through her tears
Showed your stern face and altered mood,
Which first awoke my fears.

As grows the storm-cloud on the blast,
My darkening fears have grown and grown;
But let, oh, let me keep the past,
Though hope and love have flown.

Again in dreams I silent stand,
As that pale night, black leaves beneath;
Against your side you press my hand,
I feel each throbbing breath.

The night wind moans in the long grass ;
By it, or thee, was the tale told
Which made the ghost of true love pass
Wringing her white hands cold ?

Though side by side, arm linked in arm,
It swept between us bitter chill,
And now in blinding sunshine warm
I shiver with it still.

Here in the same long grass I lie,
The selfsame branches overhead ;
I watch the pitiless blue sky ;
Would it shone o'er me dead !

TOO LATE.

While day in dying grew in beauty rare,
Of noble deeds I dreamed, soon to be done,
When swift between me and the setting sun
There swept a vision, sorrowful but fair, —
A woman weeping, veiled in shadowy hair.
Dimly I felt her grief and I were one;
Yet was such love for her in me begun,
I kneeled, and for her grace implored her there.

Then her wrung hands slowly unclaspèd she,
From her pale brow she swept the hair away;
Eyes too well known looked at me mournfully
"Alas!" she said, "my name is yesterday.
Yours was I once, what did you unto me?
Mourn, mourn too late for her you cast away."

SEPARATION.

Blue, blue the sky; the bright sun smiles
And flickers on the emerald grass;
Fair o'er the valley, miles on miles,
The light cloud-shadows dancing pass.
The flies buzz merrily, the breeze
Sings through the leaves its joyous song;
In the near field, half hid by trees,
The peaceful oxen plod along.

The quails from shady thickets call,
Soft scents of summer breathe around;
Sweet dreaming joy broods over all,
Earth's sorrow gives no sigh, no sound;
Yet the dull aching at my heart
Shows this is earth, though it be fair.
Why wish to meet where all must part?
Why love? To breathe a hopeless prayer.

Cold falls the sunlight on my heart;
This laughing landscape sadder seems,
And in my life hath smaller part,
Than all the grisly shapes of dreams.
From the blue shadows on the hill

No loving eyes look back at me;
Though the birds sing, that voice is still
That said " Good-by, think oft of me."

Let him love Nature who is glad,
And answer her with smile for smile,
Or find stern pleasure in the mad,
Tempestuous storms that shake erewhile
The mighty ocean's heaving breast.
Let him love Nature! He may bear
Her touch upon his heart, and rest
Unsaddened when she is most fair.

But who have been together long
And now are parted, each from each,
Must hear in Nature's gayest song
The saddest sounds the heart can reach.
Would that she palely shone through storms
Where lightning's sword the tempest wields,
Nor mocked me with these peaceful forms,
This sunlit pastoral of green fields!

TO A BUNCH OF YELLOW DAFFODILS IN MY SICK-ROOM.

Light within a darkened place,
Golden glow 'mid dusky gloom,
You brighten all my curtained room
With your innocence and grace,
With your delicate sweet bloom,
Yellow, yellow daffodils!

You have caught the wakening gleam
Of the gentle sun of spring,
And its freshness with you bring,
Winning to a joyous dream;
Far from gloom and suffering
You carry me, sweet daffodils.

I feel the breeze that sweeps the hills,
And see the green fields stretching wide,
Dotted with herds on every side;
I hear the murmur of the rills,
Rejoicing in the sweet spring-tide
That blooms in you, my daffodils.

TO ——.

My dear one, when you write that you are sad,
And that you long your weary head to lean
Upon my shoulder, that so long hath been
Its loving resting-place in grief, a mad
Tumultuous sorrow shakes my very soul
To feel pale distance, like a cloud, between
Your sorrow and my comforting, and keen
My anguish ere I may my heart control.

Yet, love! though absence is so like to death,
And all my thoughts seek you with yearning pain,
And hover round you where you weep alone,
Farther than heaven from hell, while you draw breath,
Am I removed from those who pour in vain
Their loving tears above a silent stone.

TO THE ORGAN-MAN.

Ah, pleasant vagrant! Hast thou come again
To play thy wandering music in our street,
While through small curly heads fair visions fleet
At its enchantment? As thy well-known strain
Mounts to the nursery window, swift the pane
Warms 'neath the touch of baby faces sweet
Pressed list'ning towards it, as do flowers to greet
With rosy welcoming the summer rain.

And to one heart not so untouched by time,
Across the years thy wavering notes recall
A lonely child, who from a window longs
To be an organ-man. Oh, fate sublime!
And though the years have sung her other songs,
Thy music then seemed sweeter than them all.

TO A SICK WIFE.

My love, dost see this little pale blue flower?
I plucked it where the summer fields stretched wide,
Sun-kissed, embraced by hills on every side,
In purple distance stretching to the sea.
There, where I breathed the joy of summer's power,
There sprang my tears at the swift thought of thee,
Prisoned by walls, upon thy couch of pain!
And, as I bent my head, my sad glance fell
Upon this flower, in whose fair depths there dwell
The summer sky and summer's mystery;
And so to pluck it for thee I was fain,
That it might summer's image be to thee,
As thou all womanhood art unto me!

SONNET.

I STAND and dream before the sunset skies
Fading to a pale yellow shining where
The purple hills lift up their summits bare,
While at my feet the misty valley lies
And faints from sight in opal mysteries.
I turn, this loveliness with thee to share,
And my heart sinks to find thou art not there,
And gone are all my rapturous reveries.

I raise my eyes to heaven's fast-dark'ning dome,
Spread wide in beauty, where its pure white spark
The first star shows, and sadly wander home
To my poor darling in her sombre room,
And seek her white hand glimmering through the dark,
And softly kiss it in the tender gloom.

IMMORTALITY.

Dearest, thou art not dead, although the grass
Grows green above the spot where thou art lying,
And prone above thee flung, my tears outvying
The summer rain, upon the fragrant mass
Of flowers I press hot lips, in vain, alas!
In vain are all my kisses and my crying!
No answer comes, save from the night wind sighing,
As low behind the hills the day doth pass;

Yet as I kiss the turf that doth thee cover,
And look out through the dusk despairingly,
I seem to see white angel pinions hover,
And my heart whispers that thou canst not die,
But livest in the sad heart of thy lover,
And in his grief find'st immortality.

CONSOLATION.

You tell me time will stay my grief,
That loved and lost are soon forgot;
That though the pang is sharp, 't is brief.
Blind and insensate! see you not
If this be true, you have bereft
Me of the only thing that 's left
To dignify my lot?

Go, leave me; you can ne'er have known
What true love is, or you 'd divine
That winter winds on roses blown
Are such cold words to grief like mine.
Can you no comfort find but this? —
Forgetfulness? — Not of one kiss
The memory I 'd resign!

TO THE MEMORY OF A NOBLE WOMAN.

Days, months, and years are gone since she was dead,
Yet the white lily of her memory
Still lives and blooms in its sweet purity,
By tears of love and sorrow nourished.
Naught is forgot; her graceful, drooping head
And sweet, pathetic loveliness I see;
From those dark, tender eyes still looks at me
The loving faith whereat all evil fled!

Her star of love still guides past ignorant sin,
Teaching the soul to shun world-righteous wrong;
My blind heart, dazzled by temptation's lure,
Needs but to ask itself, "Her eyes so pure,
How would they look reading my thoughts within?"
When swift the answer as an angel's song!

KNOW THYSELF.

WHAT dread behest was given by the old Greek,
Gnothi seauton,— Learn thyself to know!
Whether self-knowledge cometh fast or slow,
At its dread coming proudest souls are meek;
The bravest shrink, the strongest are but weak,
Before perfection's mirror, that shall show,
Reflected in its brightness, all our low
And vain self-seekings, who for God should seek.

What were the avenging Furies' scourge of old,
To one fell glimpse of our own pettiness,
Which robs Heaven's joys of all their power to bless?
And what were Dante's tortures, hot or cold,
To souls enslaved by burning passions' stress,
Or hearts congealed 'neath ice of selfishness?

TO A FARMER ON THE DEATH OF HIS WIFE.

Poor heart bereaved,
What can God give to thee,
To compensate for what He took away?
Oft hast thou grieved;
But then she grieved with thee,
And now alone thou first feel'st sorrow's sway.

All through the day
Shall Sorrow walk with thee;
While the slow oxen draw the heavy plough,
Thy lonely way
Of life thou seem'st to see
In the dark furrow that thou treadest now.

When sinks the sun,
And homeward thou dost turn,
How sinks thy heart to see the closèd door!
Where is the one
For whom thy heart doth yearn?
Shall her smile bid thee welcome home no more?

The dry leaves sigh
Beneath thy heavy tread;
The sunset's golden glow fades into night;
As thou draw'st nigh
The very house seems dead,
Nor greets thee with its wonted cheerful light.

SILENT LOVE.

I.

In golden silence was our love's beginning:
No words I spoke, but looked into thine eyes,
Whose violet depths replied in accents winning,
"Wake, soul! to loving thoughts; brave deeds, arise!"
In other worlds than this was our first meeting,
Although among th' indifferent crowd it seemed;
In fancy's realms, for that glad moment fleeting,
I dwelt, and found them fairer than I dreamed.
One year was ours, in which with timid gladness
We looked and loved, and loved but spoke no word;
We were but young to know the bitter sadness
Of parting ere each other's voice we heard, —
Naught left of our short stay in Fairyland
But a few faded lines in childish hand.

SILENT LOVE.

II.

O'ERCOME by grief and pain and bitter loss,
I looked to thee, across the gathering years;
With quick response you stooped beneath my cross,
And lightened my sad load and dried my tears.
Once more for two short years our hearts again,
Though weary grown, yet knew the old delight,
With sadder joy and nigh akin to pain,
Soft twilight glow that lingers into night.
And dearer seems because we ever feel
Its melancholy charm must fade so soon,
While its mysterious shadows do reveal
A softened beauty that 's denied to none.
Thus silent like the night comes our love's end —
Would through the clouds some star its beams might send!

IN THE FIRELIGHT.

With you in the dim firelight here,
My love, I count the minutes golden,
Till, gazing up in your face, dear,
Love doth my heart so much embolden,
That, sitting silent at your feet,
I catch your hand that 's idly playing
Through my rough locks, with touches sweet,
While far from me your thoughts are straying.
And as I hold your hand in mine,
Soft, timid kisses on it breathing,
I wonder if you e'er divine
How fair love's crown for you I 'm wreathing.
On your white hand my burning cheek
I dare to lay, with gentle pressure,
And wish that my mute touch might speak
Aught of the love I may not measure.
Then as your looks I clearer trace,
Lit by the firelight's sudden blazing,
I note the sadness in your face
As thoughtful at the coals you 're gazing,
And such a tender grace the more
From your sad thoughts your looks do borrow,
That if I loved you, gay, before,

I must adore you when in sorrow.
Yet when I see those tear-filled eyes,
Forgive me if I can't help wondering
For whom those precious tears arise —
If on some past love you are pondering.
Alas! though you fill all my heart,
It sometimes holds this fear, my dearest,
That in your past I have no part,
And in your future but the merest.
Dear! let my eager gaze recall
One, all whose thoughts with you are teeming;
Can you not love again at all?
I 'll dream you can — 't is such sweet dreaming!

WITH A PORTRAIT.

Let this face smile for you, as I have smiled
Oft through the firelight at your upturned face,
Whose eyes looked into mine, wistful to trace
What vision of the past had thus beguiled
Me to long musing silence, till the mild
Yet half-reproachful questioning of your gaze
Sudden recalled me from the gloomy maze
In which I wandered, sad, unreconciled.

Then in your eyes as in some woodland stream
Shady and cool, unvisited before,
I saw my own sad looks reflected clear,
And smiled to feel sorrow itself grow dear
By loving sympathy, and grieved no more,
But straight awoke from my despairing dream.

TO E. W. GURNEY.

IN MEMORIAM.

With all the summer's gifts upon thy head,
In rich September's ripest season thou
Hast left us, waiting not for winter's snow
Nor till the dry leaves rustle 'neath our tread.
Naught of that high perfection vanishèd:
The warmth of youth still in thy heart did glow
Though manhood's cooler judgment touched thy brow,
And over all was modest kindness shed.

Uncomprehending grief, that 's half surprise,
Fills me for thee, and her, thy dearest one:
Thou of the gentle heart and friendly eyes,
Canst thou be cause for grief now thou art gone?
No! Let us gather joy from all the years
When we knew thee, — great joy, though shown by tears.

A SICK CHILD.

THOSE fevered lips where blooms the flower of Death,
Those bright, bright eyes that soon no more may see,
That tossing golden head, that panting breath,
That small, hot hand still groping after me —
The little fluttering hand I smiling take,
But in that smile my heart-strings seem to break.

WHAT IS THE GIFT?

Ah, love! what is the gift I ask of thee?
Is it that I may win a full return
For all the tender longing that doth burn
And fill my heart with such sweet ecstasy,
As hand in hand we sit, and silently
Watch the cool waves dash on the burning sand,
And lave with their fresh touch the parching land
Whose hot lips drink the kisses of the sea?

No! such high dashing hopes are not for me —
Yet to one tender bliss I would aspire:
If thou wouldst let me share thy griefs on earth,
Earth should be heav'n, and grief a joy entire,
Since borne for thee. Let others share thy mirth,
But lean on me in grief, when tears flow free.

CAN THOSE ALONE BE SAVED?

Can those alone be saved who *wish* aright?
What if, with all our struggling, we are strong
Only to keep our words and deeds from wrong,
But over hopes and wishes have no might?
What if, in dreams, like birds set free, at night
Our thoughts sweep far afield, a joyous throng,
Towards that forbidden clime for which they long,
And harsh the waking in the wintry light?

Hast Thou no mercy, Lord, for such as these,
Poor shiv'ring souls who shrink, yet bear their lot;
Who stand upon temptation's edge and freeze,
With ne'er a cloak to shield their nakedness?
Share Thy cloak with them, Lord! and stoop to bless
Those who have loved Thee, though they knew it not!

ON MILLET'S SHEPHERD LEADING HIS SHEEP HOME AT TWILIGHT.

In beauty fades the softly dying sky,
With quiet sweep of twilight loveliness
The wide and simple landscape seems to bless,
While in the lessening light is heard no sigh
Or sound, save as the sheep go rustling by.
A serried troop, with hanging heads, they pass,
Intent on cropping the short dewy grass,
Heedless of beauties that above them lie.

Naught breaks on the unconscious solitude
Of nature; e'en the shepherd's musing form
Seems but a part of all the beauty there;
With head down-bent, as in the twilight warm,
From conscious thought 'neath nature's spell subdued
He wanders dreaming through the golden air.

ON MILLET'S PICTURE OF TWO WOMEN SEWING BY LAMPLIGHT.

Ye silent toilers, lift your weary eyes,
And loose your unaccustomed tongues, and tell
What thoughts within your brooding memories dwell,
Whence the sad patience on your lips that lies,
Speaking of constant toil and mysteries
Of simple nature ye alone know well,
Whose days flow on with the monotonous swell
Of laboring ocean 'neath dark, quiet skies.

Does love light up for you all common things,
As this one lamp with its untiring beams
Weaves for the homely room a crown of light,
And o'er its poverty soft beauty flings?
Do little flaxen heads, deep sunk in dreams
Behind the curtains there, make sweet the night?

ŒDIPUS TO JOCASTA.

ON SEEING THE GREEK PLAY AT HARVARD.

Ah, terrible Jocasta! with those eyes
Once large and soft with love, but now more vast
Than ocean grown, with horror of the past
And dread of coming woe, as when the skies
Grow ominous with darkness, and there lies
A cloud o'erhead, which doth pale twilight cast
O'er shivering earth and warn it of the blast.
Affright with gazing at our destinies
I turn to look on thee, whose eyes dilate
With living terror of that awful storm,
As darkly thou didst see it rise apace;
Such cruel warning of our future fate
Speaks from thy looks aghast, thy shrinking form,
That I would rather meet death than thy face.

TO FRIENDSHIP.

I GAZE deep in your fondly smiling eyes,
Whose dark blue depths a liquid twilight seem,
Which fairer than the noonday sky I deem,
Wherein love's sun rules o'er men's destinies,
And shows us all the bitter-sweet that lies
In the hot struggle for its bliss supreme.
Your gentler light, in a dear restful dream,
Enwraps my soul in sweeter mysteries,
And glad I feel your presence and the power
Of your pure friendship that so softly bright
Beams o'er my path as does the gentle moon;
And all my life seems fairer in this hour,
Rounded to beauty in its tender light
That rests my wearied soul from the hot noon.

WRITTEN ON THE BACK OF A CONCERT PROGRAMME.

You are the poem of my life,
Writ on my heart in words of flame;
Although the verse may change, its theme
Is still the same.

Whene'er I see aught sweet or rare,
The wild rose or the woodland stream,
The star by night reflected there,
Of you I dream.

But music is your very soul,
With you it floods and fills my heart;
It ceases — and I weep to feel
You too depart.

SONG.

As flowers in shade that grow
  Dream of the light,
So dreams my heart of thee
  By day and night.
So dreams my heart below
  Of thee above,
And thy light shines for me,
  The light of love.

By summer breezes blown,
  Swayed in sweet dreams,
Low bend all flowers to greet
  The sun's warm beams.
Though not for me alone
  Thy light may shine,
Low bends before thy feet
  This heart of mine.

ON SWINBURNE'S POEMS TO A CHILD.

You sing of passion, freedom, of the sea,
All mighty themes to touch the hearts of men ;
Yet scarce are past the fire and whirlwind, when
We hear a still, small voice, and lovingly
You lull the babe upon its mother's knee,
Songs mingling with its dreams. Her bosom then
Thrills to the echo of each note again
That sings all childhood's joy and mystery.
Small flower faces look out from your rhyme,
And there among them smile my very own ;
Sweet children's voices from your measures ring
Like shaken silver bells in liquid chime —
I hear my darlings, yet not theirs alone,
Since for all childhood through all time you sing.

MUTABILITY.

Ah, tree! beneath whose sighing boughs,
We oft have sighed and turned to kiss,
You saw our smiles and heard our vows,
And knew our short-lived bliss.

If other lovers now you shade
With chequered green, ah! never tell;
They 'll learn too soon how love can fade,
How soon it says farewell!

A JUNE MORNING.

"Up rose the sun, and up rose Emilie."
CHAUCER.

THOU art the very spirit of the morning
As, robed in spotless white,
Thou slantest through the hall, its darkness scorning,
As might a ray of light.

Thou stand'st upon the steps; the sunbeams falling
On thy dark waving hair
Touch it with gold, gold that needs no refining,
Such gold as thou shouldst wear.

Thy soft brown eyes that into mine are smiling,
Clear as the woodland brook,
Where red gold sunbeams hide, have no beguiling
In their calm, steadfast look.

I see thee now as, gathering flowers, thou standest
Upon thy garden walk;
I follow to receive the rose thou handest,
And hear thy gentle talk.

Gone are those roses that with flower-like fingers
Thou gav'st me, wet with dew;
But even in my love and memory lingers
Thy glance, sweet heart and true.

MY DEAREST SORROW.

THESE poignant hours of darkest woe
Are all of joy I ever find;
'T is saddest pleasure thus to know
That still I hold thee in my mind.
I hug my pain, since, caused by thee,
'T is all of thee to me is given;
My memories are more to me
Than all my hopes of Heaven.

Careless and happy once I seemed,
Nor knew my heart such grief could fill;
Then for a few short days I dreamed
That mine thou wert — that dream lives still!
The joyous heart that ne'er knew pain
I wish not, since it knew thee not.
Give me my own sad heart again,
And let me be forgot.

A LAST EVENING.

Sing! sing! and let me watch your face to-night,
That proud, sweet face that I no more may see,
Save when, alone, across the bitter flight
Of years, it rises in my memory.

The firelight plays amid your golden hair,
That gold for which my heart cries out and dies,
Yet I should love you if you were less fair, —
I love you with my heart, not with my eyes.

It is your sadness touches me, your grace,
That sweet, pathetic grace around you shed,
The tenderness your song brings to your face;
Will it so shine on me when I am dead?

If by my side you stand a moment, while
I lie there cold, too cold to feel your look,
Will you guess how my heart was yours the while?
I blame you not; 't was but your own you took!

Here in the dark I sit; you, in the light.
I tremble with the sadness of your song,
And yet I know there 'll never come a night
When for such precious grief I shall not long.

You do not guess that I shall come no more.
I touch your hand, our parting must be brief;
You radiant stand within the open door —
You shall not suffer, I 'll not show my grief!

No more, no more! 'T is like some cruel dream.
One moment, so, I hold you with my eyes,
Then out into the dark and cold, which seem
Fit emblems of my future destinies.

THE BLIND MAN'S[1] LAST WORDS.

"I MUST *feel* God!" the blind man, dying, said;
"One moment long my hand on Him must lay.
You who have seen Him in white clouds by day,
And whom the fires by night have often led,
As Israel of old, know not this dread
Which now o'erwhelms me, as my groping way,
Doubting, yet longing for faith's blessèd stay,
From world unseen to unseen world I tread.

"The world eternal, say you? Matter, space,
Seem but a point in the vast sweep of time.
Since life to me hath been but one long night,
Unlit by stars that make earth's night sublime,
Grant me, O Lord, one touch, thy touch of grace!
Dying, O God of Newton, give me light!"

[1] Nicholas Saunderson.

IN THE FOREST.

PEACE in the depths of pathless woods I sought.
Harassed and weary from the daily round
Of little cares that chainèd all my thought,
I flung myself exhausted on the ground;
My hot cheek on the cool damp moss I pressed,
And longed to feel the soft and rhythmic beat
Of Nature's heart, thus pillowed on her breast,
And softly o'er my weariness a sweet
Tide of oblivion poured, and I at last found rest.

From the dim thicket the wood-thrush's song
Floated to heaven; and I more felt than heard
Its sweet upspringing melody; the bird,
Unseen in fragrant shade, seemed but a voice
From my past youth, that sung, "Love and rejoice!"
I dreamed and listened, dreamed and listened long,
While a new joy awoke in pulses strong
Through my whole being, and my heart 'gan sing
A song of brotherhood for every living thing.

A little squirrel stopped and looked at me,
His tiny paws pressed to his throbbing heart;
I felt he was as I, and I as he,

Of the great universe a living part.
What are you then? his bright eyes seemed to ask;
What is this life that we together share?
Is it a joy, a dream, a sorrowful task?
Here for to-day, to-morrow — anywhere —
A bubble that reflects the world, then vanishes in air?

The bird's wild notes floating to sunny skies,
The little squirrel watching silently,
The murmurous humming of the gnats and flies,
All were but parts of the great whole with me,
And they and I drawing precarious breath!
I seemed to love them all, and plainly see
Only in loving each and all we live;
And this the secret that o'ermasters death,
To love and ask for nothing, but unstinting give.

HUGO LEONHARD.

DIED NOVEMBER 15, 1880.

Oft by thy music hast thou made us weep
Whom now thy silence moves to tears again;
Sweet were those tears, bitter are these, and vain!
They cannot wake thee from thy longed-for sleep.

IN FRENCH METRES.

TO POESY.

CHANT ROYAL.

Lo ! softly break the shadows grim of night,
And silently the gates of heaven unclose ;
On level rays from o'er the eastern height,
The morn sweeps, joyous, blushing like a rose ;
Her dewy robe of soft empurpled air
Half shows and half conceals her white feet bare,
In golden sandals shod, that seem to fly
Like graceful swallows as all suddenly
And swift she comes, the high tree-tops among,
Waking the little birds, who quick reply,
Singing to thee, O Poesy, a royal song.

When soon the fervent noon asserts his might,
And bumble-bees amid the flowers doze,
Dreaming of honey and the purple bright
That richly in the clover's bosom glows ;
While the red pine-leaves yield their fragrance rare
'Neath noon's hot tread, that joys to linger where
The shrill cicada merrily doth try

His little pipe, and with the wood-thrush vie —
There gently strolling the wood-paths along,
Noon lifts his full, sweet voice melodiously,
Singing to thee, O Poesy, a royal song.

When sunset's glorious hues have taken flight,
And round earth falls soft twilight and repose,
And all is darkness, save pale primrose light
That lingers still behind the pines and shows
Their shadowy forms engraved in beauty there,
In the slow-fading light revealed more fair;
When gently murmuring, cool breezes sigh
Round the warm, fragrant earth, my heart swells high
With keen, delicious sorrow, that doth long
To pour sweet fancied grief tumultuously,
Singing to thee, O Poesy, a royal song.

Morn, noon, or eve, pale sorrow or delight,
Make me the more thine own; my love but grows
More tender, as the littleness and spite
Of this world's hopes and cares themselves disclose.
Most glad I leave the city's heat and glare,
And seek the sea-washed cliffs, where cedars spare,
Jagged and few against the cool blue sky
Like misty shadows, rest the dazzled eye.
There on the short-cropped grass, amid the throng
Of merry insects, dreaming do I lie,
Singing to thee, O Poesy, a royal song.

To Poesy, who doth my love requite,
When, worn with struggle hard, 'neath heavy blows
I swerve aside, half vanquished in the fight,
With banner torn that once so proud uprose,
Drooping from tired hands that scarce can bear
It heavier grown with tears of dull despair.
From thy sky realms of beauty, at my cry,
Then swift thou com'st, imperial Poesy!
And all my heart springs up with purpose strong
To welcome thee and thy base foes defy,
Singing to thee, O Poesy, a royal song.

ENVOY.

As at thy feet I fall, thou mayst descry
My eager blushes, lest thou shouldst deny
All merit to my verse, that would prolong
Thy praise, yet, timid, on thy grace rely,
Singing to thee, O Poesy, a royal song.

I WILL NOT LOVE!

RONDEL.

I WILL not love, since love ends in defeat;
I will not love, since love must turn to loss!
Yet to lie dreaming on deep fragrant moss,
In love's beginning, yields a joy complete —
To follow through the wood Love's wayward feet,
If with gay beckoning hand my path he cross!
I will not love, since love ends in defeat;
I will not love, since love must turn to loss!

And yet I still am following where most fleet
Love dances on before with backward toss
Of his bright sunlit locks, whose golden floss
Has snared my heart amid its tangles sweet.
I will not love, since love ends in defeat;
I will not love, since love must turn to loss!

RONDEAU.

THE FLOWER OF MY LIFE.

THE flower of my life thy love shall be,
My heart was waiting, longing after thee;
Thou cam'st, and the sad past I useless deemed
Has found a meaning sweeter than I dreamed.
Love's glance hath taught my tearful eyes to see
The beauty hid in life's sad mystery.
I never guessed the joy Fate held for me
Till through the dull leaves of the past forth beamed
The flower of my life.

Ah, vivid blossom, that all-gloriously
'Neath threatening skies burst forth my soul to free
From sorrow's darkness like a star that seemed
The fairer since alone through clouds it gleamed,
My very soul leapt up to welcome thee!
The flower of my life!

LOVE'S SEASONS. TRIOLETS.

SPRING.

THROUGH the soft, tender green of Spring,
When birds loud sing old Winter's knell,
Young Love peeps out, a winsome thing,
Through the soft, tender green of Spring;
His pretty looks such joyance bring
That hearts, like birds, with rapture swell,
Through the soft, tender green of Spring,
When birds loud sing old Winter's knell.

SUMMER.

As grass before the summer wind
Love bends me to thy will,
And art thou loving or unkind,
As grass before the summer wind,
My every thought's to thee inclined,
Thy wishes to fulfill.
As grass before the summer wind,
Love bends me to thy will.

AUTUMN.

When glorious Autumn crowns the hills,
Her golden treasures heaping,

My full heart higher yet love fills,
When glorious Autumn crowns the hills,
And with such joyous rapture thrills,
For very joy I 'm weeping ;
When glorious Autumn crowns the hills,
Her golden treasures heaping.

WINTER.

When Winter winds blow coldest,
And scurrying snow-flakes fall,
Then, Love, thou art the boldest.
When Winter winds blow coldest,
Thou warmly me enfoldest,
And Summer dost recall —
When Winter winds blow coldest,
And scurrying snow-flakes fall.

NOVEMBER.

A RONDEL.

SOFT sighed the boughs o'erhead, "No more,
Love comes no more to you and me;
With joy and pride and ecstasy
Loves comes not as he came before."
Cold blew the breeze the waters o'er,
Alone she sat beneath the tree;
Soft sighed the boughs o'erhead, "No more,
Love comes no more to you and me."

Chill pierced the wind to her heart's core,
Hot broke her sobs, and wearily
She turned her face out to the sea
And watched the waves break on the shore.
Soft sighed the boughs o'erhead, "No more,
Love comes no more to you and me."

A RONDEL.

My friend, where thou art gentle kindness dwells,
That laps my soul in a soft, restful dream,
As floats a flower bell upon a stream,
Which joyous from a woodland spring upwells,
And softly murmuring through the long grass swells.
Like such sweet waters doth thy friendship seem.
My friend, where thou art gentle kindness dwells,
That laps my soul in a soft, restful dream!

When my too eager heart the world repels,
And others mock the warmth they folly deem,
I turn to thee, and oh, the joy supreme
To read the sympathy thy quick glance tells!
My friend, where thou art gentle kindness dwells,
That laps my soul in a soft, restful dream!

RONDEAU.

I LISTEN TO THE VOICES.

I LISTEN to the voices of the sea,
Standing alone, where oft I 've stood with thee;
Then throw my voice far out upon the roar
Of ocean breaking on this rocky shore,
Singing a song of glorious victory —
Singing of those who died to make men free!
Yet through my song low wailing comes to me
Of maids lamenting heroes fallen in war —
I listen to the voices.

Then sinks my song, and I weep silently.
Death came too soon, though it came gloriously,
And I shall look upon his face no more,
Nor feel his arm surround me as before.
My country, thou hast ta'en a bitter fee —
I listen to the voices.

THIS GOLDEN DAY!

A RONDEAU.

THIS golden day together we have past —
A golden day! but slipping by too fast,
As, shod with joy, I lightly strolled with thee
O'er sunny sands beside the winter sea;
A summer sea it looked, but that no mast
And not a single boat was there; the vast
Translucent ocean, with light mist o'ercast,
Flung opal splendors but for thee and me,
This golden day!

Gaunt pines but lately broken by the blast
To-day waved in soft beauty unsurpassed,
While through their tops the breeze sung dreamily. —
O thou, my dear one! if thou hast for me
No coming love, then let this be my last,
This golden day!

TO SORROW.

RONDEAU, SHORT FORM.

Sorrow, since to thee her love is due
Which in sweetest pity had its rise,
When I look in her sweet-smiling eyes,
When she vows to me her love anew,
If one moment I'm to thee untrue,
Then thy sharpest pangs my heart surprise,
Sorrow!

Then my dawning joy thou dost subdue,
Whisp'ring doubt that all Love's joy denies,
"What if, pity gone, love also flies?"
So to thee I dare not say adieu,
Sorrow!

TRIOLETS.

I.

When all Love's roses fall
And on the cold ground scattered lie,
Then, sobbing, I recall,
When all Love's roses fall,
How thou didst swear Love could not die!
Now bitterly we say good-by,
When all Love's roses fall
And on the cold ground scattered lie.

II.

Like the foam on the sea,
Like the dew on the flower,
Thy love crownèd me —
Like the foam on the sea.
But I learned its sad power,
When it went in an hour,
Like the foam on the sea,
Like the dew on the flower.

TO LOVE.

A RONDEAU REDOUBLÉ.

I DREAM of thee, Love, as the bud of the rose,
I would live in thee, Love, as the bird in the sky ;
My heart throbs with fear of Love's fevers and throes,
Yet Love's sharpest pang is when Love says "Good-by!"

On warm fragrant pine leaves, soft kissed by July,
I fling myself down where the summer wind blows.
What is this new joy wakes my heart with a sigh ?
I dream of thee, Love, as the bud of the rose !

And as with soft rapture the bud doth unclose,
Its rich crimson heart opening wide 'neath my eye,
A new tide of life through my whole being flows,
I would live in thee, Love, as the bird in the sky.

Yet alas, what charm have I on which to rely ?
If I yield to thee, Love, thou wouldst banish repose ;
Before thy dread whirlwind my spirit would fly,
My heart throbs with fear of Love's fevers and throes !

Shall I hopelessly venture my pains to disclose?
Shall I shun her sweet presence if hope she deny?
How could I escape if to charm me she chose?
Yet Love's sharpest pang is when Love says "Good-by!"

No, Love, I 'll not leave her, nor foolishly try
To obscure the one star on my life's sky that glows;
The sorrow thou givest I take thankfully;
More precious than all meaner joys are Love's woes,
I dream of thee, Love.

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